

# **City of Saint Paul**

## **Employee Resource Network Policy**

Effective Date: April 28, 2017

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this document is to define authority, responsibility, accountability, and process for the formation and operation of City of Saint Paul Employee Resource Networks (ERNs).

### **Overview**

ERNs are city-sponsored, employee run groups that promote diversity and inclusion or individual professional growth for employees with common interests or backgrounds (e.g., gender, disability status, ethnicity or race, sexual orientation, generation, etc.).

ERNs align their goals with those of the organization to produce mutual benefit, and can improve an organization's ability to leverage existing employee diversity, promote inclusion, and gain improved outcomes in talent development, business operations, and organizational culture enrichment.

ERNs improve employee engagement and retention by providing a stronger sense of community within the city's workforce.

### **Authority**

The Office of Human Resources has oversight authority of all city sponsored ERNs. There will be a ERN Council chaired by the Human Resources Director and made up of leaders throughout the City and will include at least one Executive Sponsor.

### **Approval Process**

The ERN Council will oversee both the initial and the annual approval process for ERNs. This process includes:

1. Completion of a formal application, where approval will be based in part on an assessment of the items below.
  - a. Stated purpose of the ERNs will have a clear and direct connection to City's vision/mission, core values, and organizational outcomes.
  - b. Support one or all of the following critical areas: 1) talent development, 2) business operations and 3) organizational culture enrichment.
2. All requests will be considered on an individual basis and will be submitted to the ERN Council where the proposals will be reviewed with a recommendation for approval or denial. The ERN Council will respond back to the ERN leadership within one month. The ERN Council's determination is final.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

### **Executive Sponsor**

Executive Sponsors must be city employees that are a Department Director or Deputy Director or equivalent. As part of the initial proposal, the group must solicit and find an Executive Sponsor willing to sponsor this group based on their own interest and capacity.

Executive Sponsor responsibilities include:

- Participates in the development of the ERN's strategic plan and annual work plan, and provides support and direction to the group.
- Serves as a resource to identify opportunities, helps advance the group's purpose, and provides information on available resources.
- Meets at least twice a year with the ERN's leadership team to ensure group activities are: business related, enriching, and contribute to leadership development of members.
- Reviews the ERN's annual report and approves it prior to submission.

### **Leadership Officers**

ERNs will have, at minimum, a chair and a secretary. The group may create additional officer positions (e.g. vice-chair) if they determine the need exists and have a member who can fill that role. A maximum of four officers are eligible for paid leadership time as described below.

Officers must understand they are representing the City in their leadership roles. Additional responsibilities of the officers include:

- Chair(s)
  - 2 year terms suggested, with leadership rotation
  - Leads in driving activities to meet goals
  - Delegates roles in the group's activities
  - Schedules meetings
  - Facilitates reporting process and files necessary paperwork
  - Responsible to address behavior which does not support the charter of the group
- Secretary
  - Records meeting attendance
  - Records meeting minutes
  - Facilitates ERNs publicity/outreach

### **Membership and Participation**

- ERNs are employee organized and managed.
- Participation is voluntary and open to any City of Saint Paul employee.
- As an option, ERNs may use an application process for new members to help ensure commitment and shared understanding of the group's purpose. This process must be clearly outlined and be submitted to the Office of Human Resources for approval.
- Anyone can join any ERN as long as they support the charter of the group.
- Any discussions or activities by ERNs must follow City of Saint Paul policies, including but not limited to the Workplace Conduct and Internet and Email policies

- ERN meetings should be organized as a safe place for members to have open discussion to express their thoughts or feelings. However, if there is an allegation of a City policy violation, the city is obligated to investigate complaints; persons involved will be directed to participate in the investigation.
- ERNs cannot:
  - Promote, advocate or engage in political activity.
  - Promote or advocate any religious position.
  - Operate or function as an employee labor union or exclusive representative. The ERN may not make direct proposals to management nor negotiate terms and conditions of employment. However, the ERNs may provide information about specific topics or concerns to management.
  - Charge dues or hold fundraising events using City time or equipment.
- Any group found to be in violation of policies stated in this document, or any other City policy is subject to immediate disbandment.

### **Activities**

ERN activities may include, but are not limited to:

1. Talent development that contributes to recruitment, hiring, retention, and promotion by:
  - a. Contributing to employees' professional development (leadership, mentoring, coaching).
  - b. Identifying workforce engagement opportunities.
  - c. Actively participating in development, implementation, and refinement of projects and initiatives.
2. Business Operations that support processes, practices, and projects by:
  - a. Fostering knowledge and perspective sharing.
  - b. Assisting in efforts to define and implement projects and initiatives.
  - c. Actively engaging in service development and delivery.
  - d. Involving employees in policy development and refinement.
3. Culture Enrichment that fosters internal and external relationships by:
  - a. Increasing engagement through inclusive and collaborative opportunities.
  - b. Hosting events, seminars, and conferences that give members and employees the opportunity to network and develop skills.
  - c. Celebrating cultural, educational, and other special events.

### **Time Allowance**

- ERN members are allowed up to 2 hours of paid time per month during regular work hours to participate in group activities. However, any time that exceeds the two-hour limit will be unpaid time. Employees who are members of more than one group are allowed a maximum of 2 hours total a month.
- City employees who are ERN leaders are allowed an additional 2 hours per month of paid time during regular work hours to plan, lead, and participate in group activities.
- Social activities or volunteer activities will not be eligible for paid time.
- Participation must not interfere with an employee's regular work or work performance; those wishing to participate must seek and receive their supervisor's permission.

- ERNs have equal use of City conference rooms for the purpose of regular meetings and are expected to utilize resources effectively.
- Participation in ERNs must not result in the accrual of overtime (OT) or shift premium pay.

### **Communication**

- ERN members may use City communication systems (interoffice mail, email, telephone, etc.) as it pertains to ERN activities to notify members of meetings, events, meeting actions, or notes.

### **Annual Review and Approval**

The ERN Council will conduct an annual review of all ERNs to ensure that the group's goals and objectives continue to contribute to the City's vision/mission, core values, and organizational outcomes. The ERN Council will make recommendations for approval or denial.

- a. Approval must be obtained from the ERN Council by submitting an annual report containing the information below by December 31 each year. The following documents are required:
  - a. ERN charter.
  - b. A summary of the previous year's accomplishments.
  - c. A plan for the coming year.
  - d. Roster of active members.

Each group will be notified by email of approval or any deficiencies that preclude approval by January 31 each year.